

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1444

E. O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOUSA E CASTRO COMMENTS ON PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER CPT SOUSA E CASTRO, ARMED FORCES WILL NOT PUT FORWARD ITS OWN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO IS NOT THE PREFERRED CANDIDATE OF THE ARMED FORCES, HE STILL HAS AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO GET THE NOD IF CHOICE IS LEFT TO THE PARTIES. END SUMMARY

1. DURING MAR 5 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER CPT SOUSA E CASTRO MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

-- PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION: THE ARMED FORCES WILL NOT PUT FORWARD ITS OWN CANDIDATE. THE INITIATIVE RESTS WITH THE PARTIES. GEN EANES IS WIDELY RESPECTED AND HAS BROAD SUPPORT
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WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES, BUT HE HAS SAID HE WILL NOT RUN.

PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO IS AVAILABLE, BUT HE DOES NOT HAVE BROAD SUPPORT WITHIN THE MILITARY. AZEVEDO'S PRINCIPAL HANDICAP IS HIS PERSONAL STYLE WHICH TURNS OFF MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES; LACK OF SUPPORT FOR AZEVEDO HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH INTRA-SERVICE RIVALRIES. NO DECISION ON A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IS LIKELY, HOWEVER, UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS. THE MAJOR PARTIES ARE UNLIKELY TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO SUPPORT ANY CANDIDATE UNTIL THEY HAVE A MORE ACCURATE GAUGE OF THEIR STRENGTH AT THE POLLS.

-- AFM-PARTIES PACT: LANGUAGE IN THE PACT WHICH TO SOME MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AMBIGUOUS OR PRESAGING A POSSIBLE RETURN TO MILITARY DOMINATION OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED TROUBLESOME. THE RC IS COMMITTED TO PLAYING A REDUCED POLITICAL ROLE AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF INTERNAL REORGANIZATION CONSISTENT WITH ITS CHANGED ROLE. THE MILITARY COMMISSION WILL CONTINUE TO MEET WEEKLY AND WILL HAVE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES. THE FULL COUNCIL, WHICH NOW MEETS EVERY OTHER WEEK, MAY MEET EVEN LESS FREQUENTLY.

-- PARTY PREFERENCES: THE SOCIALISTS WILL HOPEFULLY CONTINUE TO BE THE LEADING PARTY FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS. IF THE PS DOES NOT EMERGE ON TOP, THE SECOND CHOICE WOULD BE THE CDS AND NOT THE PPD. THE PPD UNDER SA CARNEIRO "LACKS DEFINITION." SA CARNEIRO IS UNNECESSARILY AGGRESSIVE. THE PPD COULD WELL FIND ITSELF REDUCED TO STATUS OF MINOR PARTY.

-- AZORES: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WILL TAKE UP THE AZOREAN STATUTE OF AUTONOMY AT ITS NEXT MEETING ON MAR 8. THE REGIONAL JUNTA IS PUSHING HARD FOR IMMEDIATE APPROVAL BY THE RC. THE PUBLICATION IN MAR 3 EDITION OF "TEMPO" OF THE ERRONEOUS REPORT THAT JUNTA PRESIDENT GEN ALTINO MAGALHAES WAS ABOUT TO RESIGN OVER THE STATUTE ISSUE WAS APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO PUT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON THE COUNCIL. FAVORABLE ACTION BY THE RC ON MAR 8, HOWEVER, IS UNLIKELY. APPROVAL OF THE STATUTE IS CLEARLY A POLITICAL ISSUE BETTER LEFT TO A POLITICAL BODY SUCH AS THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

2. COMMENT: AS SOUSA E CASTRO'S REMARKS INDICATE, AZEVEDO IS NOT THE PREFERRED CANDIDATE OF THE ARMED FORCES. IF THE

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CHOICE IS LEFT TO THE PARTIES, HOWEVER, AZEVEDO STILL HAS AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO GET THE NOD. AT DINNER MAR 5 PS LEADER SOARES TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT EANES HAD INDICATED IN PRIVATE THAT HE WOULD DEFINITELY NOT BE A CANDIDATE. ACCORDING TO SOARES, THIS LEAVES AZEVEDO "VERY WELL POSITIONED."

3. SOARES ALSO NOTED, SEEMINGLY AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, THAT RAPID EVOLUTION TAKING PLACE IN MILITARY THINKING MAY YET MAKE IT

POSSIBLE FOR A CIVILIAN PRESIDENT TO EMERGE. HE GRINNED
BROADLY AS HE SAID THIS, AND ASSEMBLED SOCIALIST DINNER
COMPANIONS JOINED IN SMILE.
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